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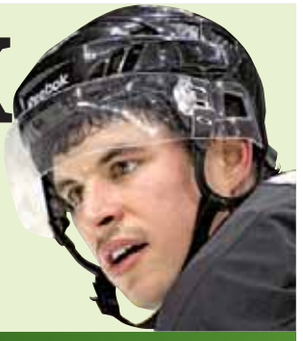
LUNCH RUSH
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SMOKED MEAT AT DUNN'S {page 20}

SETBACK
SIDNEY CROSBY SIDELINED AGAIN — INDEFINITELY {page 23}



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Wayward. Bear

▶ A conservation officer tranquilizes a bear atop a garbage truck in downtown Vancouver yesterday afternoon.

JAMES GEMMILL/VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Cub nabbed downtown

A black bear cub was captured yesterday after it was seen atop a garbage truck in downtown Vancouver. Police and conservation officers were called after people spotted the animal at Cambie and West Georgia, near Queen Elizabeth Theatre, just after 3 p.m. A conservation officer shot the bear with a tranquilizer. The animal was then carried to a pickup truck. It will be released back into the wild.

Pedalling change

- **ICBC dealt with 391 reported crashes involving cyclists in 2010**
- **Councillor wants to see province get involved in safety measures**

Collaboration is key to keeping cyclists safe, says a Vancouver city councillor.

According to ICBC data released last week, there have been 1,695 cyclists injured in the city alone from 2006 to 2010, with an average of 338.2 reported crashes involving cyclists per year. Many more incidents go unreported.

Coun. Geoff Meggs was one of those victims, having been struck by a vehicle while cycling in a bike lane on Angus Drive in 2010.

"There are more people cycling all the time, even now in December," said Meggs, who suffered separated vertebrae in the collision. "I think the numbers show where the problem areas are quite well. What I'd like to see is for the province, with all their agencies like ICBC, to get more involved."

While cycling education is readily available, Meggs says the province could help municipalities protect cyclists with cameras at troubled intersections, infrastructure money, uniform safety regulations and road-design standards.

Burrard Street is a clear problem area for cyclists, with the areas around both ends of the bridge accounting for four of the top seven crash locations.

Meggs says the separated bike lane on the bridge has brought increased safety, as have the other bike lanes downtown.

"People flock to (bike lanes) because it is much safer," he said. "Even now it may not be packed, but there's a steady flow."

All the more reason to take cycling safety and infrastructure more seriously, Meggs says.

The number of cyclists in the city is expected to continue growing, especially as the city's plans for a bike-share program are dealt with in council in 2012.

Last week, Vancouver programmer Eric Promislow compiled an interactive map of all cyclist collisions reported to ICBC throughout the region. It can be found at bentframe.sandbox.activestate.com.

MATT KIELTYKA

GOOGLE.COM

Repeat offenders

Top crash locations involving cyclists:

- **E. 2nd Avenue and Main Street:** 16 crashes.
- **Clark Drive and 10th Avenue:** 14 crashes.
- **North end of Burrard St. Bridge, including ramps:** 13 crashes.
- **Burrard Street and Davie Street:** 13 crashes.
- **South end of Burrard St. Bridge, including ramps:** 10 crashes.
- **Burrard and Robson streets:** 10 crashes.
- **Pine Street and W. 10th Avenue:** 10 crashes.

SOURCE: ICBC DATA FROM 2006-2010

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Are we killing Nemo?

Things aren't looking too good for the real-life animals that inspired Pixar's Finding Nemo.

According to three Simon Fraser University biologists, one in every six species related to characters in the blockbuster family film are currently threatened by extinction.

According to the research, sharks and turtles are most at risk.

"It's unthinkable that the characters in Finding Nemo could become extinct, but this is the reality unless we pay more attention to the diversity of marine life," said SFU's Loren McClenachan.

METRO

Former B.C. Lion guilty of sex assaults

Josh Boden, a former member of the B.C. Lions, was convicted of two sexual assaults in provincial court in Vancouver this past Friday.

Criminal Justice Branch spokeswoman Samantha Hulme says Boden was also found guilty of assaulting a police officer and obstructing a police officer.

He will now undergo a psychiatric assessment and a pre-sentencing report.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Spin. Class

▶ Vancouver's Hedspin will be vying for the title of world's best party-rocker.

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

DJs to bring the party to Vancouver

Hedley Tuscano, a.k.a. Hedspin, will take on DJs from Argentina, India and Spain tomorrow for the second night of competition of the Red Bull Thre3Style World Finals at Venue Nightclub. The four nightly winners will go head-to-head Saturday to take the title of world's top party rocker.

Urban gardening on a grand scale

North America's first vertical farming system coming to Vancouver Able to produce 92 tonnes of lettuce

MATT KIELTYKA
@METRONEWS.CA

Neighbourhood gardens, backyard chickens coops, front yards producing wheat.

Vancouverites certainly have a green thumb when it comes dabbling in locally sourced, sustainable food options.

So it only makes sense for a local company to take that urban-farming concept and run with it.

Valcent Products announced yesterday that it is teaming up with Easy-Park to install the first high-density vertical growing system in North America.

The VertiCrop will be able to produce 92 tonnes of fresh organic lettuce a year, all from the roof of a downtown parking lot at 535 Richards St.

"It supports that community sense we're seeing with community agriculture in Vancouver, but expands on it to a commercial scale," said Christopher Ng, COO of Valcent. "It shows that Vancouver a is progressive place. We're a Vancouver company, so why not do it here?"

In addition to making fresher food available to locals, Ng says urban farming is the answer to adressing food-security and global-demand issues that are expected to become prevalent in the near future.

Valcent expects the first vegetables will be harvested from the site in April or May.

CONTRIBUTED

▶ VertiCrop will be North America's first vertical growing system.

1 news

Toddlers are likely to experience a reaction to the first shot of the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, but serious reactions are rare. Scan the code for the story.

To scan 2D barcodes in Metro, download the free ScanLife app at 2dscan.com.

On the web at metronews.ca

U.S. presidential hopeful Rick Perry's new campaign video has incited nearly 700 reply videos, many of which are parodies. See video at metronews.ca/video.

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KENDRA WONG/FOR METRO

▶ Protesters march to Port Metro Vancouver in protest of free trade.

Occupy back in spotlight

Protesters at Port Metro Vancouver prevent trucks from entering Supporters of movement frown on march

KENDRA WONG
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

Occupy Vancouver returned to the public eye with chants of solidarity as they blocked some 50 trucks from entering one of Vancouver's largest ports yesterday.

The march, which began at Callister Park by the Pacific Coliseum and moved through the streets to the McGill Street entrance to Port Metro Vancouver, was a show of support for other Occupy movements on the West Coast of North America that staged similar protests at major national ports.

"We need to stand in solidarity with other Occupy movements," said Mya, a spokesperson for Occupy Vancouver.

"There is a lot of environmental destruction that happens at the ports.... There are a lot of issues surrounding Vancouver (and) we need to stand together against them."

The march was met by 40 police officers at the end of the Commissioner Street overpass, preventing protesters from entering the port.

Despite the disruption that backed up trucks along McGill Street, some truck drivers didn't seem to mind.

"As long as I don't get stuck here for three hours, they can continue protesting," said a truck driver, who was temporarily prevented from leaving the port due to the protest.

Five protesters were later arrested at the Hastings Street and Clark Drive entry for breach of peace. They were released from custody around 6 p.m. No criminal charges were laid against them.

Former MLA to co-chair city's housing task force

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS
@METRONEWS.CA

CONTRIBUTED

▶ Olga Ilich

A former B.C. MLA will co-chair Mayor Gregor Robertson's new housing-affordability task force, the city announced yesterday.

Olga Ilich was elected to the legislature in 2005, representing the Richmond Centre riding, and served as labour minister in 2006 after being the tourism minister.

"I'm excited to help because I've been in the housing business for 30 years," said Ilich, who served as president of Suncor Development, a Richmond-based real estate development and construction company. "I'm very optimistic that I can make a contribution."

Ilich also served as executive vice-president of Progressive Construction Ltd., and president of the Urban Development Institute.

Ilich said she is looking forward to working with people in the areas of finance, architecture, academia and real estate to generate new ideas and proposals and address the challenges of unaffordable housing in Vancouver.

Robertson announced last week in his inaugural address that he would be creating a task force that would examine the causes of unaffordable housing in Vancouver, review city land assets for more affordable housing options and study financial models in other cities.

Body found in Nanaimo backyard

A Nanaimo resident doing some gardening in his backyard made a gruesome discovery yesterday — the body of a man.

RCMP Const. Gary O'Brien says the death is suspicious, and an autopsy will be needed to determine how he died.

He says the homeowner is not a suspect.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Witnesses mum after brutal fight

Abbotsford police say they're not getting any cooperation from witnesses to a series of weekend fights that have left two teens in hospital with serious head wounds.

One of the victims, who is 17, is in critical condition after being hit in the head with a baseball bat. Const. Ian MacDonald says bear spray and knives were also used. THE CANADIAN PRESS

High hopes for points program

Abbotsford Airport has launched a rewards program aimed at luring travellers who are seeking cheaper airfares by flying out of Bellingham.

Airport business-development manager Jean-Paul Laube says Abbotsford is losing about 100,000 passengers a year to Bellingham.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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B.C. Lion Tad Kornegay gets the view of his life ◆ Kornegay wanted the same experience as his teammate, linebacker James Yurichuk, who got his day with the Grey Cup atop a mountain ◆ Yurichuk hopes his unique Grey Cup celebration video will put the spotlight on the CFL

TEXT AND PHOTOS: **DANIEL PALMER**

▶ From left, Bradley Friesen, B.C. Lions player Tad Kornegay and Deanna Alexander enjoy the view from atop a 1,830-metre mountain near Pitt Lake.

Leo gets a peak of B.C.

After B.C. Lions defensive back Tad Kornegay heard about his teammate's day with the Grey Cup on top of a mountain, he wanted in on the experience.

Last week, James Yurichuk and friend Bradley Friesen flew in Friesen's helicopter to a snowy summit and filmed a risky and visually stunning tribute to the Grey Cup.

"All the boys on the team got so jealous when they saw the video," Yurichuk said. "They started calling me like, 'How'd you get that hookup?' So I gave them Brad's number and they're trying to get a ride."

Since being traded to the Lions in July, Kornegay said he hasn't had time to see the best of B.C.'s backcountry, and wanted to take in the scenery before leaving for New Jersey.

Friesen agreed to take Kornegay and friend Deanna Alexander for a thrill ride up the Pitt River to a 360-degree view of the Fraser Valley, albeit without the coveted cup.

"I've never been to the mountains," Kornegay said before the trip yesterday. "This is going to be an experience for me."

Friesen said he loves flying and wants to share the experience with others.

"When I saw how jealous Tad was of Yuri's experience, I wanted to give him that, too."

Yurichuk said he hopes his video — released today on YouTube — will garner international attention for the CFL.

▶ Kornegay takes in his first experience of the mountains.

▶ From left, Friesen, Kornegay and Lions linebacker James Yurichuk prepare to take off from Boundary Bay airport yesterday afternoon. The trio were promoting a Grey Cup video released on YouTube today.

▶ Bradley Friesen manoeuvres his R44 Robinson helicopter at the mountain summit yesterday.

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U.S. requests drone from Iran

CAROLYN KASTER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Barack Obama is pressing his request that Iran return the U.S. surveillance drone captured by the country's armed forces.

Obama said he would not comment "on intelligence matters that are classified." But he said during a White House news conference with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki that the U.S. wants the top-secret aircraft back.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"We have asked for it back. We'll see how the Iranians respond."
BARACK OBAMA, U.S. PRESIDENT

Saudi Arabia executes woman

Saudi authorities have executed a woman convicted of practising magic and sorcery. The Saudi Interior Ministry says in a statement the execution took place yesterday.

The London-based al-Hayat daily quoted Abdullah al-Mohsen, chief of religious police who arrested her, as saying she had tricked people into thinking she could treat illnesses, charging them $800 per session. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Syrians go on strike

Protesters target ailing economy, regime supporters
Government pushes ahead with municipal elections

UGARIT NEWS GROUP VIA APTN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ This image from amateur video made available by the Ugarit News group yesterday purports to show security forces in Daraa, Syria.

Syrians closed their businesses and kept children home from school yesterday as part of a general strike, a powerful show of civil disobedience to pressure President Bashar al-Assad to end his nine-month-old crackdown on a popular uprising.

The open-ended strike takes direct aim at the country's already ailing economy. It is designed to erode al-Assad's main base of support — the new and vibrant merchant classes who have benefited in recent years as the president opened up the economy.

If the economy continues to collapse, al-Assad could find himself with few allies inside the country, where calls are growing by the day for him to step down. The authoritarian president is already struggling under international isolation and suffocating sanctions.

It is difficult to gauge the strength of the strike because the regime has banned most foreign journalists and prevented local reporters from moving freely. But there were signs it was being widely observed in particular in centres of anti-government protest: The southern province of Daraa, the suburbs of the capital, Damascus, the northwestern region of Idlib and in the restive city of Homs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clashes continue

- **Activists said a new round** of clashes between Syrian troops and army defectors began on Sunday with a major battle in the south and spread to new areas yesterday, raising fears the conflict is spiralling toward civil war.
- **The British-based** Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says new clashes between soldiers and defectors were reported yesterday in Idlib in the north, and that fighting continued for a second day in southern Daraa province. Four members of the security forces were killed as a result of the clashes there, the Observatory said.
- **At least 16 people** were reported killed nationwide yesterday, most of them in Homs, according to various activist networks.

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No burka during citizenship oath

It's a legal matter: Immigration minister Oath-takers must show entire face Rule takes effect immediately

Prospective Canadians are no longer allowed to wear veils while they utter the oath of citizenship, the federal government announced yesterday.

Immigration Minister Jason Kenney told a news conference in Montreal that new Canadians will have to remove any face-coverings, such as the Islamic niqab or burka, while they swear the oath of citizenship. The new rule, which requires oath-takers to show their entire face, takes effect immediately.

Kenney said it's not only a question of "deep principle" for someone to show their face while taking the oath in front of their fellow citizens; it's also a matter of legal concern.

"I don't know how we can verify that someone whose face is covered is actually taking the oath that the law requires of them," Kenney said.

"This is a public act of witness in front of your fellow citizens, in front of the law — and you should be willing to show who you are."

Kenney said he received complaints from citizens, MPs and citizenship judges to the effect that it's difficult to ensure individuals whose faces are covered are actually taking the oath.

He said those concerns prompted him to raise the issue during a recent meeting of citizenship judges in Ottawa.

"I asked (the judges) if this was a widespread problem and I saw a lot of them said that it was," Kenney recalled.

Kenney also defended the rule by saying it has nothing to do with religious freedom, and referred to a pilgrimage to Mecca by Muslim women as an example that supports his point.

"When Muslim women do the Haj ... they're required not to wear a veil, they're required to show their face," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Heated debate

- The location of the announcement was not without symbolism. Quebec has had heated debates in recent years over so-called "reasonable accommodation" — how much should Canada bend to accommodate newcomers.
- While in the rest of Canada, it's often raised by conservatives, in Quebec the issue is frequently raised by the left-leaning and nationalist Parti Quebecois.

U.S. high court jumps into Arizona immigration fight

ROSS D. FRANKLIN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

▶ A protester is arrested by Phoenix Police Department in July 2010.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed yesterday to rule on Arizona's controversial law targeting illegal immigrants, setting the stage for an election-year decision on an issue that is already shaping presidential politics.

The justices said they will review a federal appeals court ruling that blocked several tough provisions in the Arizona law. One of those requires that police, while enforcing other laws, question a person's immigration status if officers suspect he is in the country illegally.

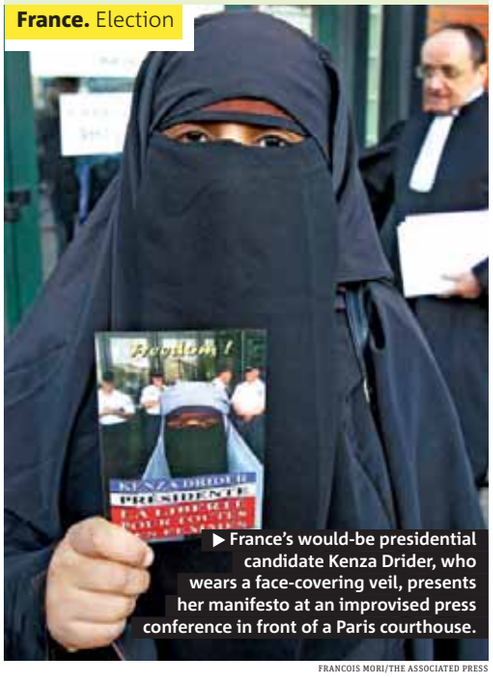
The Obama administration challenged the Arizona law by arguing that regulating immigration is the job of the federal government, not states. Similar laws in Alabama, South Carolina and Utah also are facing administration lawsuits. Private groups are suing over immigration measures adopted in Georgia and Indiana.

The court now has three politically charged cases on its election-year calendar. The other two are President Barack Obama's health-care overhaul and new electoral maps for Texas' legislature and congressional delegation.

Some 12 million illegal immigrants are believed to live in the United States, and the issue already is becoming a factor in the 2012 campaign. Republican Sen. John McCain said recently that large Hispanic populations in his home state of Arizona and elsewhere are listening carefully to what Republican candidates have to say on immigration.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

France. Election



▶ France's would-be presidential candidate Kenza Drider, who wears a face-covering veil, presents her manifesto at an improvised press conference in front of a Paris courthouse.

FRANCOIS MORI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Her presidential manifesto

Kenza Drider rattled off 30 mostly left-leaning proposals — including capping salaries and devaluing the euro — as well as her main cause, repealing the ban on wearing face-concealing niqabs in public.

Chain sticks to decision to pull ads

Lowe's is planning to stick by its decision to yank its ads from a reality TV show about American Muslims despite growing opposition the home improvement chain is facing.

Lowe's stopped running commercials during All-American Muslim after a conservative group emailed advertisers to ask them to stop advertising on the show. The group said the program, which follows the lives of Muslim families living in the Metro Detroit area, was "propaganda that riskily hides the Islamic agenda's clear and present danger." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

9,200 On Twitter, actor Kal Penn began directing people to a petition in support of the show. By yesterday afternoon, there were about 9,200 signatures.

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It's official: We're out of Kyoto

New climate deal to be signed in 2015, and would kick in after 2020

Canada is pulling out of the world's only binding climate treaty.

Environment Minister Peter Kent says Canada is withdrawing from the Kyoto Protocol.

"We are invoking Canada's legal right to formally withdraw from Kyoto," Kent said outside the House of Commons.

"This decision formalizes what we've said since 2006, that we will not implement the Kyoto Protocol."

Canada signed Kyoto in the late 1990s, but neither the current Conservative government nor their Liberal predecessors met targets. Kent says the move saves Canada $14 billion in penalties for not achieving its Kyoto targets.

"The Harper government has imposed a death sentence on many of the world's most vulnerable populations by pulling out of Kyoto."
MIKE HUDEMA, GREENPEACE CANADA

Kent says he would not be surprised if other countries follow Canada in pulling out of Kyoto.

At the Durban talks, Canada joined Russia and Japan in refusing to sign on for a second round of Kyoto commitments.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Occupy. Port

▶ The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge is seen in the background as protesters block one of the entrances to the Port of Oakland yesterday.

BECK DIEFENBACH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Protesters block docks

Anti-Wall Street protesters along the West Coast joined an effort yesterday to blockade some of the nation's busiest docks, with the idea that if they cut off the ports, they cut into corporate profits.

Splitsville for 'gay penguin couple'

Buddy and Pedro, once one of Toronto's hottest "it" couples, have broken up amid pregnancy rumours and a budding relationship with what those on Team Pedro will undoubtedly call a femme fatale.

It only took Buddy 72 hours to bond with Farai, a female penguin he was matched with on Nov. 19, after being separated from Pedro. Handlers at the Toronto Zoo split up the pair out of concern the same-sex bond would hamper breeding efforts.

Pedro has yet to get lucky, but zoo officials say it's not for a lack of trying.

"Pedro is very ready to go, per se, but his prospective mate Thandiwey is a little shy," Tom Mason, the zoo's curator of birds and invertebrates, said yesterday.

"She's not quite ready to go yet but they're beginners, they're just starting life as a pair."

The bromance was doomed from the start, said Mason.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ African Penguins swim in their enclosure at the Toronto Zoo yesterday.

Web sensation

The story of the star-crossed birds took on a life of its own when the two African penguins, dubbed Toronto's "gay penguins," became an Internet sensation last month amid outrage over their pending separation.

BBC admits bear scenes shot in zoo

The BBC's popular Frozen Planet series promises to show viewers Arctic animals in their snowy, frozen habitats, but the broadcaster conceded yesterday that recent scenes of a polar bear with her cubs were actually shot in a European zoo, not the wild, as had been implied in the program.

The broadcaster insisted that it had not misled audiences or tricked them into thinking that the scenes showing a female polar bear tenderly nursing her newborn cubs in an icy den in the dead of winter were filmed in the wild.

Its response came after The Daily Mirror accused it of "faking" the footage.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police hunt for subway groper

Toronto police say a man who pretends to be sleeping is groping women on Toronto subway trains.

Investigators released a picture yesterday of a man believed to have assaulted at least two women on the subway.

Police say the alleged sexual assaults occurred on two separate occasions on subway cars travelling on the Bloor-Danforth line.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO POLICE SERVICE HANDOUT/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ The suspect

Trucker jailed for burning body

A former truck driver has been sentenced to six years for burning a woman's body after police say she suffocated as they celebrated their engagement with a meth and bondage sex party.

Mark Andrew Rice told police that he tied up Natasha Carpenter in 2009 in Barstow, Calif., stuffed a gag in her mouth and covered it with tape.

He passed out after and woke up to find her dead.

Then, police said, he drove from California to Mississippi with the corpse in his 18-wheel truck and set fire to the truck, with the body inside.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Couple charged over subway sex

Intoxicated Toronto duo continued act on platform after being kicked off train in the afternoon

It gives a whole new meaning to riding the rocket.

A man and woman have been charged with engaging in a lewd act after a couple had sex on both a subway car and platform — in the middle of the afternoon.

The incident happened aboard a southbound train around 2:30 p.m. Sunday. A rider saw the couple — described as intoxicated and "old enough to know better" by Toronto Transit Commission spokesman Brad Ross — having sex and just couldn't ignore it.

"I wasn't there, thankfully, but from what I understand, is a customer did activate the passenger assistance alarm," said Ross. "They saw this couple engaged in I guess what would best be described as a lewd act."

The train stopped and a TTC guard boarded and kicked the couple off at Spadina station. But they clearly weren't satisfied.

"Alcohol being a factor, they I guess decided they hadn't completed their journey and continued on the platform," Ross said.

A video apparently shot by a fellow passenger shows the train stopped as a man lies on top of a woman, moving rhythmically with his bare buttocks exposed. A TTC employee in a bright green jacket with reflective material stands at a reasonable distance on the yellow subway strip, and appears to curse at the couple to stop.

Ross said the video appears authentic, although he couldn't access it from his TTC work computer.

Shortly after the train stopped at Spadina, police and EMS arrived on the platform. The couple was charged and transported to hospital due to their inebriation.

"People engaged in a sexual act on board a subway train in front of everybody else is not something the TTC ... condones. Well, it is against the law," said Ross. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Duprat's. Dream

▶ Celebrity chef Ron Duprat tosses a sweet potato as he volunteers as a guest chef in the kitchen of the Karibe Hotel in Port-au-Prince on Nov. 30.

RAMON ESPINOSA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cooking up a plan for Haiti

Ron Duprat, a Haitian-American professional who starred on Top Chef: Las Vegas, wants to build a culinary school in Haiti, to train chefs who can work at a future restaurant showcasing Haitian staples such as rice, beans and goat.

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GLOBAL ECONOMY

Canadian businesses can prosper amid debt

Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney says the advanced economies of the world are facing a massive challenge with debt, but Canada may be in a position to take advantage.

▶ Mark Carney

To a business group in Toronto, the central banker warned yesterday that a historic era of deleveraging — paying off debt — is being forced upon European countries and the U.S.

The task is so large that Carney compares it to what occurred during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and is by no means assured to go smoothly. "As a result of deleveraging, the global economy risks entering a prolonged period of deficient demand," Carney said.

"If mishandled, it could lead to debt deflation and disorderly defaults, potentially triggering large transfers of wealth and social unrest."

Carney said that Canada's relative virtue throughout this era of deleveraging puts the country in a "privileged position."

"We have much lower total government debt in Canada, our firms' balance sheets are actually in very good shape, our banking system is very strong," he told reporters.

"Our strong position gives us a window of opportunity to make the adjustments needed to continue to prosper in a deleveraging world. But opportunities are only valuable if seized."

Carney said Canadian companies in particular must seize the moment, before it disappears.

Businesses can benefit from one of the world's soundest banking systems in Canada, superlow interest rates and their own sound balance sheets flush with cash.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market moment

PRICES AS OF 5 P.M. YESTERDAY

TSX	Dollar	Oil	Natural gas	Gold
- 126.86 (11,907.89)	- $0.71¢ ($97.48¢ US)	- $1.64 US ($97.77 US)	$3.254 US (- 6.3¢ US)	$1,668.20 US (- 48.6 US)

Women the head of gift buying in family: Poll

- 80 per cent of households polled say women do the holiday shopping
- 43 per cent of women shop online, up from 34 per cent last year

Santa is a woman.

That's according to BMO's 2011 Holiday Spending Outlook.

BMO says 80 per cent of households polled said the female head of family will do the majority of holiday shopping, and this year, more and more will do it online.

BMO's annual survey revealed a substantial increase in the number of women using the Internet to shop for gifts. The figure jumped to 43 per cent from 34 per cent last year. At 49 per cent, men are still somewhat more inclined than women to shop online — but the gap is narrowing.

The survey polled 1,508 Canadians and is considered accurate within plus or minus 2.5 per cent 19 times out of 20.

"There are a number of factors behind the increase in online shopping among Canadian women," said Su McVey, vice-president of BMO Bank of Montreal.

"The ability to quickly and easily research products and compare prices and even arrange for delivery at the click of a mouse or the touch of a key pad makes it a remarkably convenient approach for busy, budget-conscious and multi-tasking women," McVey said.

HYOSUB SHIN/THE ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Women shop at a Toys R Us in Atlanta, Ga., last month.

McVey noted that advances in technology such as Wi-Fi, smartphones and e-readers have helped spur this growth.

"People of all ages are becoming much more comfortable with the technology and with the security behind online shopping," said McVey.

Regionally, married people polled in Atlantic Canada were more likely to say the female head of household does the majority of shopping — 87 per cent.

Online shoppers who don't want to pay priority shipping fees should make their online purchases by or before Dec. 15, BMO said.

That's the date when most retailers, especially those offering free delivery, require your order if you want a guarantee that Santa's packages will arrive by Dec. 24.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bell Mobility in hot seat over sports rights

The national telecommunications regulator is putting Bell Mobility in the penalty box for securing exclusive rights to hockey and football content for mobile devices.

The wireless phone company gave itself a significant competitive advantage by signing deals with the National Hockey League and National Football League, the CRTC ruled yesterday.

"Canadians shouldn't be forced to subscribe to a wireless service from a specific company to access their favourite content," Konrad von Finckenstein, chairman of the CRTC, said in a statement.

The decision followed a complaint from Telus Communications last January after it failed to secure the rights, first from the two sports leagues and later from Bell.

The NHL content includes games and video highlights, while the NFL content includes primetime games and playoff games.

Telus argued that the exclusivity of Bell's deal had a negative impact on Telus's ability to compete in both the broadcasting distribution and wireless markets.

Bell's position was that Telus could still broadcast content not covered by those deals. THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

Airline sued for charging the disabled

LAWSUIT. Disabled travellers who had to pay extra for seats on Air Canada could be in line for compensation as part of a class-action lawsuit authorized in Quebec.

A judge has approved a suit against Air Canada on behalf of disabled Canadians who had to pay extra for seats over a three-year period from Dec. 5, 2005 to Dec. 5, 2008.

The suit covers disabled individuals and also those with a functional disability related to obesity who faced extra charges for seats adapted to their condition. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Messages not deleted: Lawyer

PHONE HACKING. A private investigator working for Rupert Murdoch's News of the World tabloid did not delete voicemails from the phone of a missing girl, a police lawyer told Britain's media ethics inquiry yesterday. The claim that the tabloid not only listened to but interfered with messages left for 13-year-old Milly Dowler in 2002 triggered a furor about media malpractice that shook Murdoch's media empire.

"The most likely suggestion is that existing messages automatically dropped off after 72 hours," lawyer Neil Garnham said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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GETTING ALL WRAPPED UP IN THE HOLIDAYS

SHE SAYS ...

JESSICA NAPIER
METRO

For couples who intend to spend the holidays together, 'tis the season for family feuds and hurt feelings.

December is arguably the busiest time of the year, so when you move from being an "I" to a "we," this already-overscheduled month becomes even more complicated. With emotions running high, there can be all sorts of issues attached to deciding where and with whom to spend your yuletide time.

Do we commit to one set of parents? Divide our time between each other's family get-togethers? Try blending our families into one big (and potentially disastrous) celebration? Or do we split up and spend the holidays apart?

With all of the parental pressures and guilt-tripping the season brings, sometimes the most desirable course of action is to ditch everyone and spend December 25th alone together, eating Chinese food and watching a movie.

Married couples and those in long-term relationships can easily burn themselves out trying to fulfil calendars full of family commitments. Forget your holiday wish list, all you really want for Christmas is some extra time, or perhaps a couple of clones.

"...the turkey will never taste quite the same, and this other family's drunken uncle will seem terribly racist — on the other hand, your sloshed-by-noon-uncle is 'endearing.'"

The unfortunate reality for adult children is that you will never really be able to please the numerous sets of parents, step-parents, in-laws and extended family members. In striving to meet everyone's expectations you'll stress yourself out and turn into an argumentative and unpleasant grinch.

But, hey, isn't that what the holidays are all about?

Deciding how you'll celebrate the season will ultimately depend on a variety of factors — religious beliefs, geography, work commitments, money — but if you want to spend the holidays with your significant other, you'll have to make some compromises.

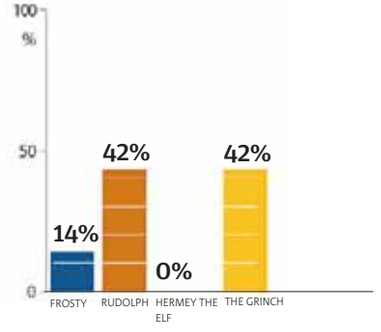
It's more than likely that at some point in your life you'll have to spend the holidays with a family that isn't your own. Yes, unfamiliar familial surroundings can be difficult: the turkey will never taste quite the same, and this other family's drunken uncle will seem terribly racist — on the other hand, your sloshed-by-noon-uncle is "endearing." They'll want to watch A Christmas Story even though you ALWAYS watch It's a Wonderful Life, and you'll be irrationally devastated.

Since every family has their own unique festive customs, you'll have to adjust your own expectations if you want to get through the holidays without weeping into your eggnog. But in letting go of some of your established traditions, you'll give yourself the opportunity to start making some new ones. And remember, it's actually a nice thing when too many people want to spend time with you.

Read more of Jessica Napier's columns at metronews.ca/shesays

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

Who would win in a holiday cartoon showdown?



Local tweets

- **@Miss604:** Carol Burnett is coming to #Vancouver for @VancouverComedy Festival - February 2012
- **@grahamclark:** I'm definitely getting dumber, but not dumb enough to be really happy about things.
- **@VanCanucks:** AV - Salo given a maintenance day today. He will play tomorrow. Hodgson is also expected to dress. Luongo will start against Jackets.
- **@JodieEmery:** The word "secure" is the opposite of "free", or "unrestrained". As such, government obsession with "security" always goes against "freedom".
- **@charliedemers:** Yuletide schadenfreude: wait til Xmas Eve, then tell the kids you're converting to Ukrainian Orthodox, so Xmas will be 12 more sleeps.
- **@BCLionsDen:** So reports are saying Benevides will have full control over coaching staff. Does that mean more changes in the Lions Den? #BCLions
- **@FarhanLaljiTSN:** Benevides will become the #BCLions new head coach tomorrow. Deal is done. No suprise

LEE GRISMER/WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Daily Zoom

Oh, hello, gecko — nice to meet you

New creature found in Mekong every 2 days!

This psychedelic gecko is one of the latest species discovered on Hon Khoai island, Mau province, in southern Vietnam.

The gecko is among 208 new species described last year by scientists in the Mekong River region of Southeast Asia, according to the WWF.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mekong River

- The region spans Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and the southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan. The report reveals an average of one new species discovered every two days.
- 28 reptiles were newly discovered in 2010, including an all-female lizard in Vietnam that reproduces via cloning.

Despite findings many species are threatened

The Mekong's wildlife population is under threat from rapid, unsustainable development and climate change. One tragic indicator of the decline of biodiversity is the recent extinction of the Javan rhino in Vietnam, which was recently confirmed by WWF.

METRO

"Mekong governments have to stop thinking about biodiversity protection as a cost and recognize it as an investment to ensure long-term stability."

STUART CHAPMAN, CONSERVATION DIRECTOR OF WWF GREATER MEKONG

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Bird flies into action

Director Brad Bird takes the leap from family films into the explosive world of live-action entertainment with Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol How he adapted his technique

STEVE GOW
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

Brad Bird was not the most obvious candidate to take over the reins of the Tom Cruise multimillion-dollar Mission: Impossible film franchise.

While the filmmaker's Oscar-winning background stands on its own, it is mostly comprised of not only animated entertainment but specifically family-oriented favourites like Ratatouille and The Incredibles.

Now with Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol about to hit IMAX theatres this Friday (it opens on regular theatres next Wednesday), Brad Bird discussed leaping from kiddy cinema to explosive live-action entertainment.

HANDOUT

According to director Brad Bird, there were only two stunts in Ghost Protocol that Tom Cruise did not do.

What was the biggest challenge of going from choreographing animation to live-action?

If I had gone from hand-held animation, which my first film, The Iron Giant, was to live-action, it would've been a bigger leap but the last two films I did, The Incredibles and Ratatouille, were dimensional; there was CGI so you could move the camera through space and you could light it like you would any film so I got very comfortable with that.

So it actually felt fairly natural to move to real people and things.

Certainly The Incredibles had its share of action too. What do you love about spy films?

They're sleek and they're exotic and fast and kind of explosive. They can go from very quiet suspense to all hell breaking loose just like that. This movie is definitely in that realm and that's one of the reasons that I wanted to do it.

I understand that Tom Cruise did all of his own stunts in this — true?

There's only two that he didn't do and in both of them the stuntman got hurt so he was very wise in not doing those two. But all of the ones on the Burj Khalifa (the tallest building in the world) where you see him climbing around, that's him. People are going to say, 'oh, that can't be him' but it's him.

Brad Bird talks Mission: Impossible

- **Bird on tourists posting photos of Tom Cruise hanging from the side of Dubai's Burj Khalifa during filming:**
"At first we were mad because the very first stuff (we shot went) online and we were like 'We can't show this stuff before the movie comes out'. But then we thought this proves that he's there, he's not a special effect."

- **Bird on Ghost Protocol being the biggest of the Mission: Impossible franchise:**
"I don't think it's the most expensive but it is the biggest. We had to be very clever with how we did things but it is the biggest and it's enormous – it was a challenge to do absolutely."

2 scene

Box office

Meryl Streep may be considered one of the finest actresses around, yet she says she believed her career was over 20 years ago. Streep, now 62, tells Vogue magazine she was offered three different roles to play a witch after turning 40. She believed it meant women in her age group were "grotesque on some level." Streep graces the January cover of Vogue magazine for the first time.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clooney's Descendants named best film by LA critics; Fassbender wins best-actor prize

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Hulk Hogan is not a homosexual, OK?

Wrestler grappling with allegations from ex-wife Claims they are untrue

THE WORD

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

Hulk Hogan, who filed a defamation suit against ex-wife Linda Bollea, says he's just trying to defend his reputation.

"After the four-year crazy divorce I thought I'd heard everything I could hear in the courtroom," the wrestling star tells Us Weekly.

"Then all of a sudden she says I abused her, that I was violent. She told everybody that I was a homosexual."

ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

▶ Hulk Hogan

Hogan adds that his real problem with Bollea's accusations is that they aren't accurate.

"If any of that was true, I would admit it, and (if) I was a homosexual I would embrace it," he says.

"If you're going to say I'm something that I'm not to try to ruin my career and my livelihood, I have to answer her back."

Look, Linda. Just because at one point in his life, your ex-husband loved Spandex, tan skin, Fu Manchus, rippling muscles, had a huge boa scarf collection, ripped his shirt off at the drop of a hat and pinned sweaty men to the ground for a living, does not mean he was in the closet while you were married.

If it were someone else's husband, however, I'd be a tad worried.

Celebrity tweets

@JohnCleese

Nearly the end of another gruelling week of talking about myself. It's a good job that I'm so interesting...

@juliebenz

whenever someone says "we're only giving gifts to the kids this holiday season" my inner child screams "NO! I want presents too!!"

@russellcrowe

90 sweaty minutes in the gym. Some days you love it, some you hate it. Today was all love.

@SarahKSilverman

My dog has to think the elevator's a time machine, right? There's no other possible explanation.

A theft-filled weekend for Lindsay Lohan

Lindsay Lohan had a drama-filled weekend, and not just because of her leaked Playboy spread.

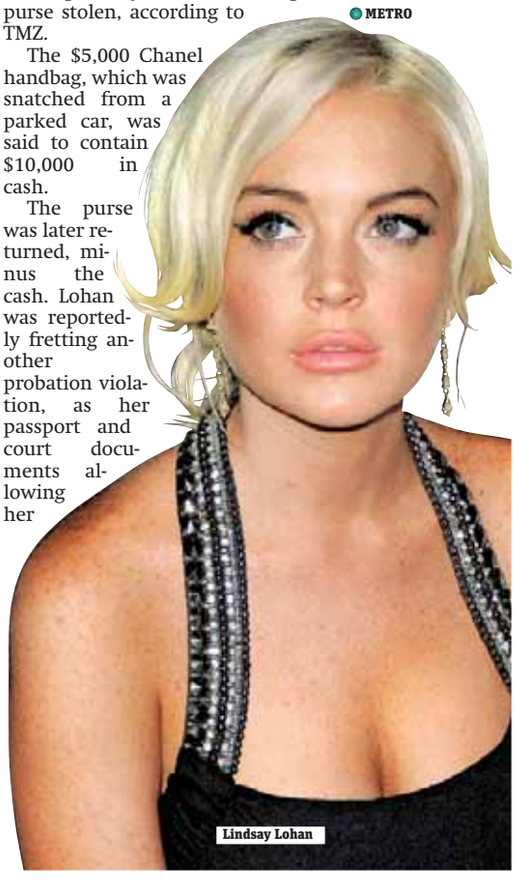
While partying in Hawaii, the troubled starlet reportedly had her purse stolen, according to TMZ.

The $5,000 Chanel handbag, which was snatched from a parked car, was said to contain $10,000 in cash.

The purse was later returned, minus the cash. Lohan was reportedly fretting another probation violation, as her passport and court documents allowing her to travel were also in the purse, but were returned safely.

Which leads us to a very pressing, unrelated question: Do drug dealers accept traveller's checks?

METRO



Lindsay Lohan

Kutcher's resolutions are set

Ashton Kutcher is looking to get a jump on his New Year's resolutions, and given the year he's had it's not such a surprise.

"I'm gonna do my resolution in December this year," he says in a Warner Bros. Studio interview.

"I'm resoluting for December so that when I come to January, and everybody else is having to go through the grind, I'm already ahead of it, I've already done it. It's like taking the PSATs. I'm just trying to stay ahead of the curve. There is a curve."

METRO

▶ Ashton Kutcher

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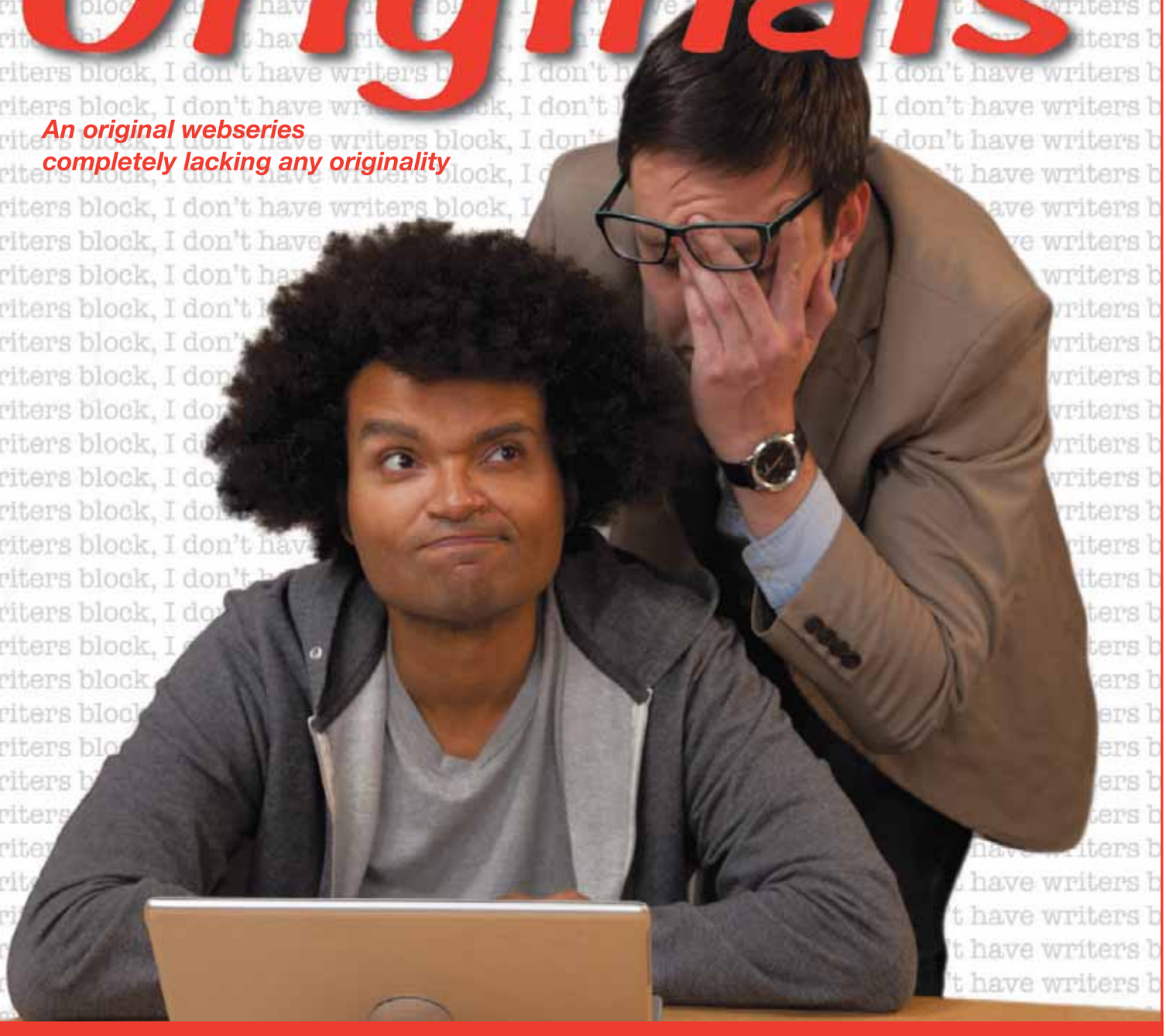


In today's episode..."The Situation"

As the cast gets a chance to strut their stuff New Jersey style, Jason attempts to finally connect with Carina. The question is will there be sparks or a nasty shock?

New episodes post every Tuesday and Thursday. Watch at www.facebook.com/OriginalsTheSeries

3 life

Babies are skeptics

New study shows that even infants can detect when you're acting shady They'll start to tune you out So remember: just because they're little, doesn't mean they aren't on to you

CELIA MILNE
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA

ISTOCK PHOTOS

▶ Don't confuse their cuteness — babies can tell when your actions don't add up.

You can't trick babies. They'll distrust you.

Researchers in psychology at Concordia University in Montreal have found that infants just over a year old can already get a bead on who is reliable and who is unreliable. The babies will quickly start ignoring cues from those who are unreliable.

"Even babies detect when someone's behaviour is not conventional," says Diane Poulin-Dubois, a professor of psychology at Concordia University. "It seems that they then turn off the 'learning switch' that typically makes them learn from that person."

Learning

Babies learn from older humans. But would they copy a robot?

Robots A team of researchers from the University of Washington found babies will imitate a robot if they have previously seen the robot playing with someone. Turns out, it's more important to babies that robots are sociable than that they look human.

Poulin-Dubois and colleagues conducted a study with 60 babies between 13 and 16 months of age.

The wee ones were divided into two groups — those with a reliable adult and those with an unreliable adult — and shown tasks they could mimic. In the first task, testers looked inside a container and expressed excitement and delight before handing the container to the baby.

In the reliable group, there was a toy inside. In the unreliable group, the container was empty. This was repeated several times.

For the second task, the same adult showed the babies a touch-on light. The tester placed it on a desk and switched it on by leaning forward and using the forehead.

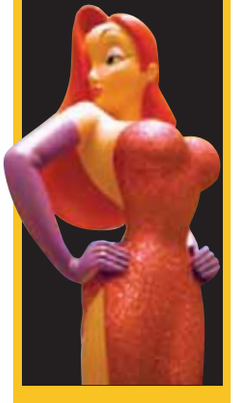
This was repeated three times before passing the light to the infant. Infants who had been tricked in the first experiment were far less likely to imitate the adult. Over two attempts, 34 per cent of infants in the unreliable condition mimicked the adult, versus 61 per cent of infants in the reliable condition.

"Babies are setting down the groundwork for a lifelong skill — remaining vigilant about who is an expert and who is not," says Poulin-Dubois.

The study was published in the journal Infant Behaviour and Development.

Trends

Twenty-two-year-old Russian Kristina Rei thought her 'thin' lips made her unpretty, so she decided to spend $5,000 (around 100 injections) in order have the pillow lips of cartoon character Jessica Rabbit. The nail technician is admitting she has an addiction, but this hasn't put her off considering another round of the $55, 'painful' injections.
METRO



Born smaller than soda cans, tiniest babies are growing up healthy

Best Health Minute

BONNIE MUNDAY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, BEST HEALTH MAGAZINE

Eat, Think and Be Merry In the December issue of Best Health, our registered dietitian columnist Sue Mah put together some excellent tips for navigating the holiday events and their appetizer trays and buffet tables. A big part of it, she says, is eating mindfully — that is, really taking time to focus on what you eat, and more importantly, how you eat. Here are a few ways.

1. Do a walkabout
Before you even put a single piece of food on your plate, take a stroll around the buffet table and check out all of the options. Mentally classify them as 'must try' or 'can do without them today.' On your plate, put a few bites of a small portion of the 'must try' foods — making sure there are two types of vegetables — plus one 'must try' dessert.

2. Chat
After your first plate of food, you may feel like going back for seconds. Instead, sit back and take a planned break to catch up with friends. It takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain you're full. After 20 minutes, ask yourself if you're really still hungry.

3. Keep your distance
Avoid standing near the party nibbles unless you have incredible willpower. When food is easily within reach, chances are you'll pick up a bite or two, or three. Let's say that two hors-d'oeuvres have 100 calories. By the time you've eaten a few, you have had the equivalent of a small meal.

Get 5 more tips in the December issue of Best Health, on newsstands now. And find our roundup of actual-size party snacks, along with their calories and fat grams. It may just help you get through party season with no added pounds. For example, can you guess what's in one of those mini quiches?
A. 50 calories and 1 gram of fat.
B. 65 calories and 3 grams of fat.
C. 80 calories and 6 grams of fat.

The answer is C. Those little party snacks can really add up.

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67 calories
of a Vodka Martini

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67

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Montreal's smoked meat deli hits our city

- If quantity is your focus, you'll want to check this out
- Choose from lean, medium or fat cut beef brisket

ERIN IRELAND

▶ Super Giant Montreal Smoked Meat ($12.99).

LUNCH RUSH

ERIN IRELAND
FOOD@METRONEWS.CA

Dunn's is all about meat. In fact, its 'meat cutter' — an employee of 30 years — is paid a premium for his sought after skills. Beef brisket, smoked 17 hours in Montreal before a trip to Vancouver for four more hours of steaming, is his focus.

After 84 years servicing east coasters, the Montreal-based restaurant chain has launched in Vancouver, serving outrageous portions of expertly sliced, fall apart meat between two unremarkable slices of light sourdough rye.

So insubstantial was the thin, mustard-brushed bread, that the finger food demanded a fork and knife to avoid a complete dismantling. The smoky brisket deserved more.

On the side, Dunn's special coleslaw was sweet, non-creamy and uninspired. The hot fries were abundant in portion, not in flavour.

A wonder, however, was the speed at which my meal arrived: four minutes.

Extremely friendly service from employees who were eager to share the Dunn's story was absolutely the highlight of the experience.

Dunn's Famous

827 Seymour St.
604-682-8938
dunnsfamous.com
Reservations: Yes
Licensed: Yes
Social lunch: Yes
Quick solo lunch: Yes
Client negotiation: Yes
Price range: $6 - $24
Rating: 2.5 out of 5

Chocolate Peanut Butter Covered Apples

Preparation:

1. In a small saucepan over medium-low, heat cream and peanut butter until bubbling. Remove pan from heat and add chocolate bits. Stir until completely smooth. Set aside to cool for 10 minutes.
2. From bottom, push a pop stick up into core of each apple. The stick should go deep enough to be sturdy, but leave enough exposed to serve as a handle.
3. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper. Place peanuts in bowls, if using.
4. One at a time, using sticks as handles, dip apples in chocolate mixture. Use a spoon to scoop up extra chocolate and pour over apples to help coat sides. Allow extra chocolate to drip back into pan. Dip coated apples into nuts. Stand apples, stick in air, on lined baking sheet. Refrigerate until firm.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ingredients:

- 90 ml (3 oz) heavy cream
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) creamy peanut butter
- 175 g (6 oz) bittersweet chocolate bits
- 4 apples (any variety)
- 4 wooden pop sticks
- Chopped salted peanuts (optional)

THE DRUNK-DRIVING ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

CHARLES THE BUTLER

ASKCHARLES THEBUTLER@ METRONEWS.CA

FOR MORE, VISIT CHARLES MACPHERSON.COM

As a hostess, how do I deal with drinking and driving for my guests at my Christmas party?
Nervous hostess

Dear Nervous Hostess,

Good on you for asking the important question! I don't need to tell readers the importance of this subject. I personally think it is just as delicate a subject no matter who this concerns. As a butler I have had to deal with this on several occasions.

Firstly, try to be prepared ahead of time. Suggest a designated driver at your event (this person can drive numerous guests home as needed) and/or have some cash on hand to send someone home by taxi if required.

After doing some research, the auto insurance website progressive.com had some great suggestions:

1. If the person is a close friend, try to use a soft, calm approach at first. Suggest that he's had too much to drink and it would be better to let someone else drive or to take a cab.

2. Be calm.

3. Try to make it sound like you are doing them a favour.

4. If the person is somebody you don't know well, speak to his friends and have them make an attempt to persuade him to hand over the keys. Usually, he will listen.

5. If the person is a good friend, spouse or significant other, tell him that if he insists on driving, you are not going with him. Tell him that you will call someone else for a ride, take a cab or walk.

6. Locate the person's keys while he is preoccupied and take them away.

Most likely, he will think he's lost his keys and will be forced to find another mode of transportation.

If possible, avoid embarrassing the person or being confrontational.

HAVE A QUESTION? EMAIL CHARLES AT ASKCHARLESTHEBUTLER@METRONEWS.CA.

Finding love

Siggy Flicker, star of VH1's Why Am I Still Single?! offers some tips

MEREDITH ENGEL
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA
METRO WORLD NEWS IN NEW YORK

Siggy Flicker knows there's another popular TV matchmaker out there, but she'll be the first to tell you that that's where their similarities end.

"I am the opposite of the Millionaire Matchmaker," said Flicker, the star of VH1's Why Am I Still Single?!

"She annoys the hell out of me. First off, I was married to a millionaire, and I left all that behind, got divorced in search of chemistry and love, and I found it with a car salesman. I don't believe in (excluding love) to just the Millionaire's Club.

"There's nothing more important than chemistry."

We got Flicker's top tips for meeting the man or woman of your dreams.

Be open to love

"If you watch somebody walking out of an office building today, they're usually on their iPod, on their cellphone, on their BlackBerry — I say first of all, look up. There is no specific place to meet somebody. Stand tall and open up your eyes to your surroundings.

"It's all about the energy you're giving off. If you're closed off and texting, your shoulders are shrugged and you're looking down — you're giving the message that you are not available. If you're single, honey, enjoy the fact that you're single. Walk tall, walk straight, keep yourself open."

Break your routine

"Go out at least twice a week. It should be more important than your full-time job. What's more important, money or love? I say love. So twice a week go out. It doesn't have to be to a bar — a bar is my least (recommended choice). Get out of the bubble. So many people have a routine; I say break the bubble twice a week. Take a class on something that you've always been passionate about — it could be ballroom dancing, it could be pole dancing."

Choose your wingmen/women wisely

"If you're single, do not go out with other singles. Why (allow for) competition? Go out with your friends who are married or in healthy, committed relationships. Take somebody who's on your side, who's gonna help you seal the deal."

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YEAR END TAX TIPS

FUN AND FRUGAL

LESLEY SCORGIE
MONEY@METRONEWS.CA

2011 is coming to an end and it's time to maximize your personal tax situation before ringing in the New Year. Avoid giving Ebenezer Scrooge more tax than you need to.

First, determine your taxable income for 2011. If you cashed in RRSPs, sold an investment property, received a bonus or pay-out from an employer, your income will be different from your regular salary.

If you collected Employment Insurance (EI) and its associated benefits, tax withheld from EI is typically insufficient to cover your annual tax liability.

Don't get caught off guard by a major tax bill this spring. Meet with a tax advisor now to strategize ways to reduce your taxes. For the majority of Canadians, the most powerful way to reduce taxes is to contribute to an RRSP.

Second, the markets were a roller coaster in 2011 and many people are facing capital losses on their investments. Review your portfolio with a financial advisor to determine if you'd benefit from taking a loss or cashing in a gain.

Third, give money by December 31, 2011 and save big! If you give more than $200 you'll receive a 29 percent federal credit instead of the 15 per cent credit for donations under $200. Donations also receive provincial credits.

Don't wait until the last day of 2011 to make an appointment with your financial advisor. Exploring ways to save on 2011 taxes now could save you a hefty tax bill next spring.

FOR LESLEY SCORGIE'S FULL COLUMN VISIT METRONEWS.CA

Revel in small pleasures

ON MONEY

ALISON GRIFFITHS
MONEY@METRONEWS.CA

Taking a break, as I've just done for the past two weeks, is one of the hardest things about being a freelance writer and broadcaster. Anyone who is self-employed will nod in agreement.

For one thing, it's hard to turn down work — you don't know when the next job will come along or if a regular gig suddenly disappears.

The problem with never turning down work is that you rarely stop to smell the roses. While many of us in this situation love what we do, work should give us the opportunity to enjoy our lives.

Whether it's roses that excite you, sports, crafts or travel, our other interests are what feed our souls and keep us balanced in troubled times.

Recently, I've been stewing over the way a publication I've worked with for years has treated me. I wanted to rage and complain. Instead, I went for a run in the woods with my dogs and gloried in their enthusiasm. I'm still upset but my non-work interests helped ameliorate the blow.

After earning your paycheque, if you can do something that makes you happy or even just content, then the work has been worthwhile.

While I was off I took a friend to a rehab session after his knee replacement. I saved him a couple of hours travel time and had a nice visit. And I had a long phone conversation with another old friend whose uncle had recently died and she was trying to sort out his estate. The best part was enjoying the moment — seizing it in fact.

ISTOCK

▶ Alison's money rule: Earning money is important but not if you don't enjoy life outside work.

I also tried to revel in life's mundane routines, which often pass in a blur but can actually be pleasurable if you focus on them.

I cleared out some clutter, listened to a neighbour complain about his health problems, raked some leaves and hung up bungee cords that were in a tangled pile. Though I'm sorry to say the enjoyable routine magic didn't work with vacuuming.

It is the season of resolutions but rather than come up with things you should do or do better, direct your thoughts to your work and non-work life. Make the most out of each as best you can and feel good about the small things.

ALISON GRIFFITHS IS THE AUTHOR OF THE UPCOMING BOOK COUNT ON YOURSELF: TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR MONEY. REACH HER AT ALISONGRIFFITHS.CA OR GRIFFITHS.ALISON@GMAIL.COM.

9 most shoplifted items of the holiday season

As if this time of year wasn't stressful enough for retailers

'Tis the season for stealing Elmo and electric tools

This time of year sees plenty of merchandise fly off the shelves, whether it's paid for or not.

Scores of shoppers will pass through the doors of countless retailers, but one in 11 of them will walk out for something they swiped with a five-finger discount, according to the National Association of Shoplifting Prevention in the U.S. In fact, $119 billion worth of merchandise will be shoplifted this year.

If you're picturing riff-raff kids stuffing stuff in their back pockets on a dare, think again: 75 per cent of all shoplifters are actually adults — adults who say they are only caught about once for every 48 times that they steal.

What is it they're after, you ask? Ad Week spoke to security professionals who named the top 9 most popular items for shoplifters — and not all of them are big-ticket items.

1 Filet mignon

Luxury meat theft is up by 21 per cent, making grocery stores and markets the most common setting for shoplifting.

2 Jameson

Shockingly, people who love to steal also love to drink. Pricey liquor makes up about 2.9 per cent of stolen merchandise.

3 Electric tools

Shoplifters, though a sneaky breed, are also quite handy. DIY items are the third most popular category for thieves — think electric toothbrushes and power tools.

4 iPhone4

No surprise here — digital gadgets, in general, fly right off the shelves and right into pockets.

ISTOCK

▶ Nothing beats the thrill of stuffing cold, raw meat down your pants and making for the door.

Apple products are especially popular among shoplifters.

The iSteal phenomenon will see 100,000 laptops shoplifted this year from big-box retailers, according to the AJ Novick Group.

5 Gillette Mach 4 Razor blades

Shoplifters have discerning taste when it comes to a smooth, close shave. Not just any razor blade will do. The $23 replacement packs and other shaving products make up 2.7 per cent of stolen items.

6 AXE

How dirty shoplifters get clean; for some reason, personal hygiene products like AXE are a hot-ticket item when it comes to theft — you might see them re-sold at flea markets.

7 Polo Ralph Lauren

Shoplifters, the well-dressed people they are, have impeccable taste when it comes to fashion.

Tommy Hilfiger is another popular brand. Theft among clothing has increased 31 per cent since 2009.

8 Let's Rock Elmo

Yes, Elmo is still popular. So popular, in fact, that it's a frequent shoplifting target, along with every item on Toys"R"Us Holiday Hot Toy List. Kids don't care how you get it, right?

9 Chanel No. 5

Shoplifters need to smell good, too. Pricey perfumes make up about four per cent of lifted merchandise.

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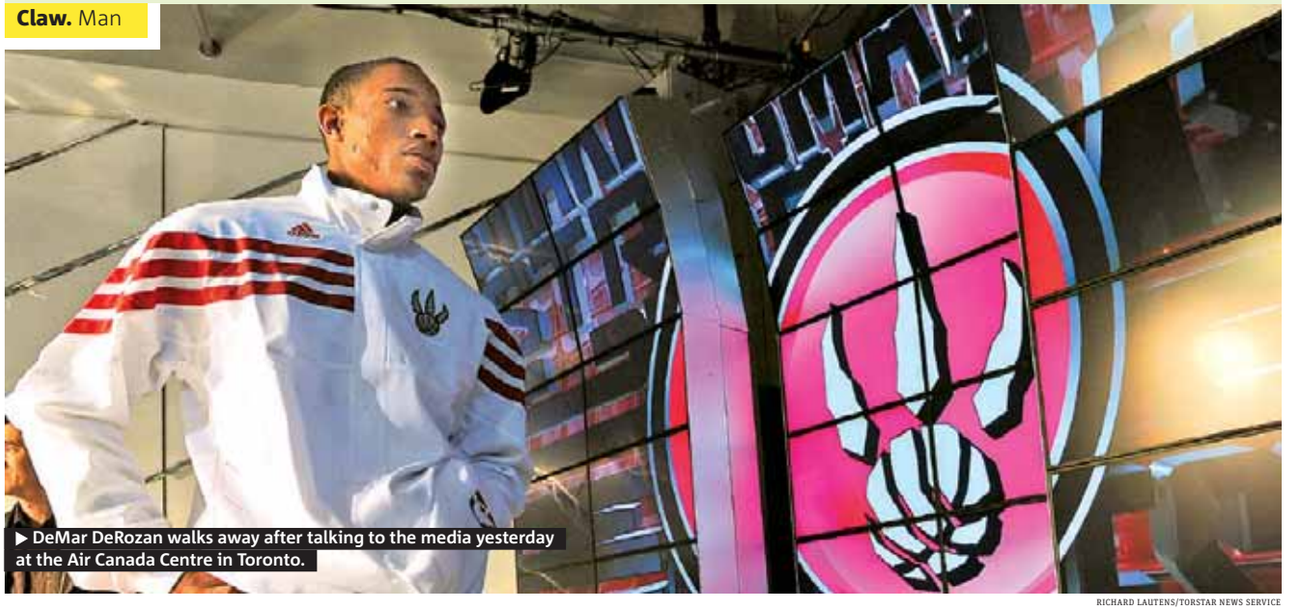
Claw. Man



▶ DeMar DeRozan walks away after talking to the media yesterday at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto.

RICHARD LAUTENS/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Raptors roster coming together with intense schedule looming

The Raptors held their traditional media day yesterday ahead of what will be a far from traditional season, with 66 games crammed into four months on the heels of the NBA lockout. To bolster his young nucleus of DeMar DeRozan, Ed Davis and Amir Johnson, Raptors general manager Bryan Colangelo has signed veterans Anthony Carter and Rasual Butler to go along with big men Aaron Gray and Toronto native Jamaal Magloire.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Uncertainty surrounds Sid again

Crosby suffers setback No word on timeline for Pittsburgh star's next return to ice

Sidney Crosby is back on the shelf — his comeback stalled indefinitely with concussion-like symptoms.

"Frustrating, I don't think that even describes it," Crosby told reporters.

Still the Pittsburgh Penguins star looked for positives yesterday, saying he is feeling "much, much better" than he did after being levelled by big hits in successive games Jan. 1 and Jan. 5 that triggered his 10-month absence from the game. He also said he felt worse only a few weeks before the Penguins training camp in mid-September.

"It's much different than previously going through that stuff," Crosby said. "I'm way better off than I was dealing with this stuff 10 months ago or whatever it was."

Still it's a setback for the NHL's biggest star, only three weeks removed from a spectacular comeback.

"I just figured it was better to be cautious here and not take any chances. That's kind of where I'm at right now," Crosby said.

"I'm not happy about watching. But I've got to make sure with these sort of things that I'm careful."

"(Crosby's) been away for so long, and was so happy to be playing with us again. It's been crazy. We've had a full team for only a couple of games."

PENGUINS GOALIE MARC-ANDRE FLEURY

Crosby's comeback appeared to be a success until he experienced headaches following a 3-1 loss to Boston on Dec. 5.

After sitting out a pair of road games as a precaution, Crosby was expected to return to practice yesterday.

Instead he sat out and told reporters that he won't practise or play until he is symptom-free. He wouldn't guess when that might be.

While Crosby absorbed several hits against the Bruins, including an elbow to the head from David Krejci, nothing appeared worrisome.

He developed headaches the next day and the Penguins decided to keep him home for last weekend's two-game road trip. When the headaches persisted throughout the weekend — Crosby acknowledged having symptoms — the Penguins weren't about to let him practise despite the absence of any test revealing a concussion. THE CANADIAN PRESS

5

The season isn't even halfway over, and the Penguins have had five players sidelined by concussions: Sidney Crosby, Zybenek Michalek, Kris Letang Robert Bortozzo and Tyler Kennedy.

NBA addresses concussions

The NBA has put in place a concussion policy that will determine when players return from head injuries.

The protocols went into effect with the start of training camps "for the safety and protection of our players," the league said yesterday.

If a player is diagnosed with a concussion, he will have to complete a series of steps to confirm that he's healthy enough for competition. Once he is free of symptoms, the player must make it through increasing stages of exertion — from a stationary bike, to jogging, to agility work, to non-contact team drills — while ensuring the symptoms don't return after each one. Then the neurologist hired to lead the NBA's concussion program needs to be consulted before the player is cleared.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLB

Brewers bring in Ramirez

The Milwaukee Brewers agreed to terms with free-agent third baseman Aramis Ramirez yesterday, agent Paul Kinzer told The Associated Press. The Brewers, who expect to lose Prince Fielder in free agency and may be without Ryan Braun if he loses his appeal for testing positive for a banned substance, could use Ramirez, who hit .306 with 26 home runs and 93 RBIs in 2011.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

4 sports

Canucks preview

Vancouver at Columbus
4 p.m.
TV: SNET

Vancouver (18-10-1) will try for its fifth-straight win in Columbus (8-17-4). Rick Nash and Vinny Prospal each have four points in the Blue Jackets' last five games.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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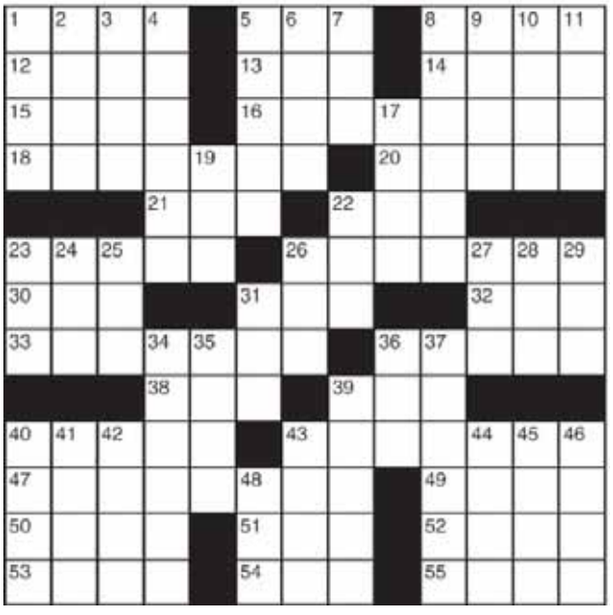

Across
1 Double agent
5 Sis' sib
8 Havana's country
12 Pre-diploma hurdle
13 Scarlet
14 October birthstone
15 Withered
16 Firewood supports
18 Humanlike robot
20 Apartment-complex unit
21 Pistol
22 Half-score
23 Rags-to-riches author
26 Moderately slow in music
30 Arthur or Lillie
31 Pismire
32 Physicist Georg
33 Pyrenees principality
36 Refuges
38 Chinese cook's vessel
39 Matterhorn, e.g.
40 Prince William's mother
43 Massachusetts city
47 Pamela or Loni
49 Strong wind
50 Use a teaspoon
51 Blackbird
52 Gaelic
53 Red — (candy)
54 Tiny
55 Kept watch on

Down
1 Small plateau
2 Yoked team
3 Fat
4 Come out
5 Gray matter
6 Tear
7 Peculiar
8 Ring around the sun
9 "Once — a time"
10 Musical combo
11 As well
17 On the rocks
19 "— Town"
22 Explosive letters
23 Lawyers' org.
24 Cariou of Broadway
25 Wander about
26 Literary collection
27 Ph. bk. info
28 Winnie — Pooh
29 Type measures
31 Noah's boat
34 Deed holders
35 Bellow
36 On in years
37 Farthest point in an orbit
39 "Tomorrow" tyke
40 Morse morsel
41 Grooving on
42 Mine entrance
43 Top-notch
44 Change
45 Otherwise
46 Saxophone need
48 Witnessed

▶ Yesterday's answer

S	L	A	V		P	R	Y		O	H	M	S
L	A	C	E		O	N	E		B	O	I	L
O	V	E	N		P	A	T	I	E	N	C	E
B	A	D	E	G	G		I	N	R	O	A	D
			E	R	R	S		N	O	R		
P	A	T	R	I	O	T	S		N	E	I	L
U	G	H		M	U	R	A	L		E	W	E
N	O	R	M		P	A	T	E	R	S	O	N
		E	A	R		P	U	C	E			
S	T	A	T	U	E		R	H	E	S	U	S
P	A	T	T	E	R	E	D		F	I	R	E
A	L	E	E		A	L	A		E	D	G	E
M	E	N	D		S	K	Y		R	E	E	K

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Sudoku

	5		7	6	9		1	
1								9
		7				8		
6	4		5		8		7	1
				9				
9	2		3		1		8	4
		4				1		
7								2
	8		2	1	3		6	

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

4	6	1	3	9	8	5	2	7
3	8	7	5	4	2	1	9	6
5	2	9	1	7	6	3	8	4
6	3	8	7	2	9	4	1	5
2	7	4	6	1	5	9	3	8
1	9	5	4	8	3	6	7	2
8	1	2	9	6	4	7	5	3
7	5	6	8	3	1	2	4	9
9	4	3	2	5	7	8	6	1

Send a KISS

You can now post your kiss, and read even more kisses, online at metronews.ca/kiss.

To Peaches
Hello — the Peaches I have written to (in vain it seems) probably wouldn't address as "Howdie". Also, he would likely not contact me at all, as is angry & it's complicated. Peaches, AKA Petal. I'm done trying anyway. Sorry for any confusion.
FROM ME

Oi!
Jeez you're cute! I honestly can't say that enough times. Someday I'll be the one planting kisses on those adorable cheeks.
FROM CAPTAIN

Matty
Where have you been? I haven't seen you for 3 days now. I miss seeing your face. I hope to see you tomorrow.
FROM R

Today 4°/-1° Partly sunny
Wednesday 3°/0° Cloudy
Know what the weather will be 14 days from now.
Check the 14 day trend.
©The Weather Network 2011

Today's horoscope

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 The truth must be told and you are the one who must do the telling.
♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 Your attitude will harden today and you will refuse to make the changes that others demand.
♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 Spell out what it is you are planning to do over the next few days and make sure everyone knows that you are serious about your ambitions.
♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 Let certain people know that you will no longer do their bidding.
♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 You're allowed to change your mind, and you're allowed to change your ambitions too.
♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 It will be easier for you to explain what you have been up to in recent weeks.
♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 You will find it ridiculously easy to get people to do what you desire today.
♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 The best way to win others round to your big idea is to come up with so many facts and figures that they simply cannot deny that you know what you are talking about.
♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 It's time to get serious about something you have been putting off for weeks or months.
♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Don't let worries and fears get the better of you.
♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 If you cannot handle something alone, ask for assistance.
♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20. You will find it quite easy to get your message across to employers and other important people today.
SALLY BROMPTON

PETR DAVID JOSEK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Caption contest

SETH HARRISON/THE JOURNAL NEWS/AP

WIN! You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image above and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.

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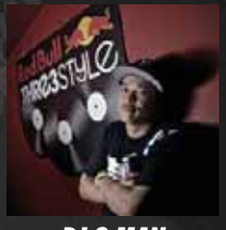
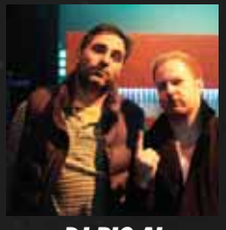
HEDSPIN
CANADA

HEDSPIN COMES FROM THE SCHOOL OF BEING A COMPLETE DJ – A PARTY ROCKER BLESSED WITH THE TALENT OF A TURNTABLIST, WHO'S DOWN WITH THE CLASSICS BUT UP ON THE HOT NEW SHIT. HEDSPIN'S PROVEN HIS PARTY ROCKING SKILLS BY WINNING THE VANCOUVER RED BULL THRE3STYLE CHAMPIONSHIP IN 2008 AND IN 2011. HIS VERSATILITY HAS SERVED AS A PASSPORT TO TRAVEL AROUND THE GLOBE WOWING CROWDS ALL OVER THE WORLD. HE IS PART OF THE NUMBER ONE DJ CREW IN CANADA CALLED THE EH! TEA DJ'S CONSISTING OF TEAM CANADA, DJ PUMP, DJ ILLO, DJ DRASTIK AND JR FLO.

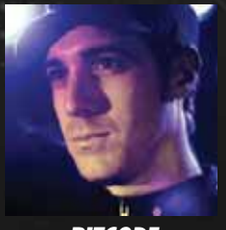


DJ 8 MAN
JAPAN

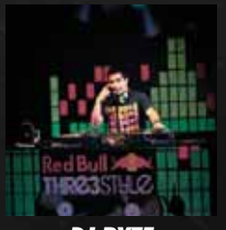


DJ BIG AL
UNITED KINGDOM

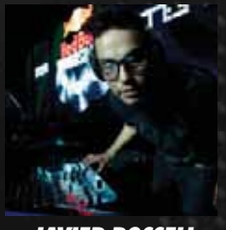
DJ BIG ONCE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



BITCODE
SPAIN

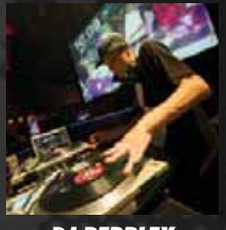


DJ BYTE
CHILE

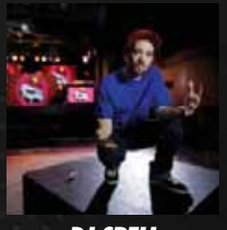


JAVIER ROSSELL
BOLIVIA

NEDU LOPES
BRAZIL

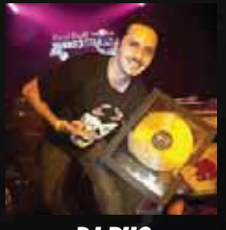


DJ PERPLEX
AUSTRALIA

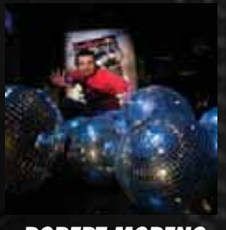


DJ SPELL
NEW ZEALAND

DJ KEN K
DENMARK



DJ PHO
COLOMBIA



ROBERT MORENO
ARGENTINA

THOMAS YOUNG
PERU

SUPA!
FRANCE

DJ DIPPY
INDIA

FMC
NORWAY

DJ BAZOOKA
SWITZERLAND

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